DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 147 241 SO 010 504

AUTHOR Long, Samuel
TITLE Systemic Disaffection: A Three-Factor Theory of Political Alienation.
SPONS AGENCY Yale Univ., New Haven, Conn.
PUB DATE Sep 77
NOTE 36p.; Paper presented at Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association (Washington, D.C., September 1-4, 1977)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Behavioral Science Research; College Students; Data Analysis; Evaluation; Interaction; *Interaction Process Analysis; *Literature Reviews; Measurement; Models; Negative Attitudes; *Political Attitudes; Political Socialization; Psychological Studies; Social Attitudes; Social Influences; Social Integration; Statistical Analysis; Statistical Data; *Student Alienation; Surveys; *Theories; Values

ABSTRACT

The paper develops a theory of political alienation based upon interactions among three antecedent conditions. Political alienation is interpreted as combining feelings of inefficacy, discontent, cynicism, estrangement, and hopelessness. The factors evaluated for their contribution to political alienation are: (1) critical perceptions of sociopolitical conditions such as racial discrimination, social deprivation, economic alienation, or discrepancies between democratic theory and practice; (2) tendencies toward personal and political irrationality which are strong enough to inhibit problem solving; and (3) psychological perceptions of freedom threat or loss through workings of the political system. The hypothesis is that political alienation will correlate positively with these three factors. Political alienation data were examined for 264 college students and compared with scales of sociopolitical reality, irrational ideation, and psychological reactance. Findings indicated that although there is positive correlation among all factors, perception of sociopolitical reality is the single best predictor of political alienation among college students and an influence on both attitudes and reactions. It was concluded that many alienated individuals do not conform with the traditional image of the alienated as apathetic, ignorant, and uninvolved but rather conform more closely to the textbook definition of the "democratic man." The appendix outlines scales dealing with discrimination, alienation, elitism, personal and political attitudes, and psychological perceptions. (Author/DB)

Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original.

ED147241

DEC 5 1977

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Samuel Long
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

SYSTEMIC DISAFFECTION: A THREE-FACTOR THEORY OF POLITICAL ALIENATION

Samuel Long

Political Psychology Program

Yale University

Prepared for delivery at the 1977 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington Hilton Hotel, Washington, D.C., 1-4 September.

JA 010 Sol

The assistance of the students, instructors, and administrators at Southern Connecticut State College in the completion of this research is gratefully acknowledged. Financial support for this research was provided by the Political Science Department and the Political Psychology Program, Yale University. Computer time was furnished by the Yale University Computer Center.

Systemic Disaffection: A Three-Factor Theory of Political Alienation

Two firm conclusions have emerged from the many studies of political alienation conducted in recent years. First, levels of political alienation are at an all-time high; and, second, they appear to be increasing, particularly regarding feelings of political distrust and inefficacy (Miller, 1974; Wright, 1976). As to the reasons for this phenomenon, however, much less is known (Koff, 1973; Seeman, 1972; Seeman, 1975; Israel, 1971; Schacht, 1970). One theory of political alienation antecedents suggests that personal feelings of social deprivation lead to a low sense of self-esteem, which, in turn, results in high levels of political alienation (Abramson, 1972:1250). Recent research testing this theory has repeatedly failed to confirm it (Long, 1974c; Long, 1975a; Long, 1976a; Long, 1976b; Long, 1976d; Long, 1976e; Long, 1976f; Long, 1976h; Long, 1977c; Long, 1977j). A second theory of political alienation is more facile in nature, positing a direct link between perceptions of systemic functioning and feelings of political alienation. In this case, the more an individual holds critical views of the sociopolitical system's operation, the higher the individual's level of political alienation (Abramson, 1972: 1259-1262). Research testing this model has rather consistently shown the two concepts to be closely related (Greenberg, 1969; Greenberg, 1970a; Greenberg, 1970b; Rodgers, 1974; Citrin, et al., 1975; Long, 1975b; Long, 1976a; Long, 1976d; Long, 1976h; Long, 1977b; Long, 1977e; Long, 1977g; Long, 1977h). Unfortunately, however, the latter model, while it possesses considerable predictive power, offers little in the way of a cogent explanation for the political reality-political alienation connection. Why, in fact, would a person who views

the social and political systems as being based on economic and racial discrimination, as exhibiting major discrepancies between democratic theory and practice, and as being ruled by an elite respond with feelings of political alienation? These perceptions, in and of themselves, do not seem to be a sufficient cause for such alienated sentiments (Long, 1976b; Long, 1976c; Long, 1976g; Long, 1976h; Long, 1977a; Long, 1977e; Long, 1977a; Long, 1977i).

One possibility, in answer to this problem, is that cognitive processes mediate between the initial perception of systemic disfunctioning and the affective response of political alienation. Two such cognitive mediators would seem especially germane in this context, the first being an irrational perfectionistic response to the operations of the sociopolitical system, and the second being psychological reactance or a sense that one's personal freedom is somehow threatened by such systemic functioning.

With regard to the initial cognitive mediator, Ellis' cognitive behavior theory provides an excellent perspective. Ellis writes that although man is born with a great potential for rational thinking and problem solving,

> . . . he also has exceptionally potent propensities to be self-destructive, to be a short-range hedonist, to avoid thinking things through, to shirk responsibilities, to procrastinate, to hate, to be callous, to make the same mistakes endlessly, to be superstitious, to be intolerant and dogmatic, to be perfectionistic and grandiose, and to avoid actualizing his potentials for growth (1973b: 171).

Furthermore, write Ellis and Harper, these innate tendencies are constantly being reinforced by society and its institutions, especially by the family. Thus, the individual is predisposed toward irrationality and, more

importantly, this irrationality is encouraged by social institutions and societal values as the individual matures (Ellis and Harper, 1975: 197).

Making the situation even more difficult for the individual, Ellis indicates that ". . . human thinking and emotion are not two disparate or different processes, but that they significantly overlap and are in some respects, for all practical purposes, essentially the same thing. Like the other two basic life processes, sensing and moving, they are integrally interrelated and never can be seen wholly apart from each other" (1962:38-39). Moreover, "much of what we call emotion is nothing more nor less than a certain kind--a biased, prejudiced, or strongly evaluative kind--of thought" (1962: 41).

Emotional disturbance, according to Ellis' theory, is caused by illogical and irrational thinking:

> Humans are exceptionally complex, so that there is no simple way in which they become 'emotionally disturbed,' and no single manner in which they can be helped to overcome their disturbances. Their psychological problems arise from their misperceptions and mistaken cognitions about what they perceive; from their emotional underreactions or overreactions to normal and to unusual stimuli; and from their habitually dysfunctional behavior patterns, which encourage them to keep repeating nonadjustive responses even when they know they are behaving poorly (1973a: 55).

Ellis, amplifying on this notion, writes that

> . . . virtually all deepseated, intense feelings of anxiety, depression, guilt, and hostility (and the concomitant dysfunctional behaviors or psychosomatic ailments that often accompany such feelings) stem from the human tendency to 'awfulize,' 'terribilize,' 'horribilize,' and 'catastrophize'--that is, to go beyond empirical data and to assume that unpleasant, unfortunate or disadvantageous experiences absolutely should, ought, and must not exist (1974: 319).

Typically, the major source of such psychological disturbance, according to Ellis, is the belief in one or more of the following irrational ideas:

> The idea that it is a dire necessity for an adult human being to be loved or approved by virtually every significant other person in his community.
>
> The idea that one should be thoroughly competent, adequate, and achieving in all possible respects if one is to consider oneself worthwhile.
>
> The idea that certain people are bad, wicked, or villainous and that they should be severely blamed and punished for their villainy.
>
> The idea that it is awful and catastrophic when things are not the way one would very much like them to be.
>
> The idea that human unhappiness is externally caused and that people have little or no ability to control their sorrows and disturbances.
>
> The idea that if something is or may be dangerous or fearsome one should be terribly concerned about it and should keep dwelling on the possibility of its occurring.
>
> The idea that it is easier to avoid than to face certain life difficulties and self-responsibilities.
>
> The idea that one should be dependent on others and needs someone stronger than oneself on whom to rely.
>
> The idea that one's past history is an all-important determiner of one's present behavior and that because something once strongly affected one's life, it should indefinitely have a similar effect.
>
> The idea that one should become quite upset over other people's problems and disturbances.
>
> The idea that there is invariably a right, precise, and perfect solution to human problems and that it is catastrophic if this perfect solution is not found (1962: 60-88).

Put more succinctly, these eleven dimensions of irrationality can be subsumed under three irrational demands:

> . . . virtually all feelings of what we call emotional disturbance stem from musturbation: from three kinds of devout shoulds, oughts, or musts that humans invent and then plague themselves with: (1) 'I must do well, and must turn into a horrible person if I don't'--leading to feelings of inadequacy, worthlessness, insecurity, self-damnation, anxiety, and depression. (2) 'You must treat me kindly,

> fairly, and considerately; and you rate a rotten individual if you don't'--leading to feelings of anger, resentment, hostility, and overrebelliousness. (3) 'The universe must make things easy for me, give me what I want without too much trouble or annoyance; and I can't stand it when this terrible universe doesn't!'--leading to feelings of low frustration tolerance, avoidance, self-pity, and inertia (Ellis and Harper, 1975: 203).

A belief in these types of irrational ideas ultimately serves to mediate between the objective reality facing the individual and his subjective reactions to that reality (Ellis and Harper, 1975; Ellis, 1971). On this point, Ellis writes of the genesis of psychological disturbance: ". . . when you have either an appropriate or an inappropriate emotional reaction, at point C (the emotional consequence), after some Activating Event or Activating Experience, especially of an obnoxious nature, has occurred at point A, A definitely does not cause C. Instead B, your Belief System about A, directly causes you to react emotionally at C" (1974: 311).

Ellis holds that these beliefs at point B are irrational because of their magical, nonempirical nature:

> . . . emotional upsets, as distinguished from feelings of sorrow, regret, annoyance, and frustrations, are caused by the individual's irrational Beliefs, and . . . these Beliefs are irrational because they magically insist that something in the universe should, ought, or must be different from the way it indubitably is. Although, then, these irrational Beliefs are ostensibly connected with reality (the Activating Events at point A), they are truly magical ideas beyond the realm of empiricism, and in reality are established by arbitrary fiat. They generally take the form of the statement, 'Because I want something it is not only desirable or preferable that it exist, but it absolutely should, and it is awful when it really doesn't!' No such proposition, obviously can ever be validated; and yet, oddly enough, such propositions are devoutly held, every day in the year, by literally billions of human beings (1973b: 177-178).

Although Ellis' theory was conceived as an explanation for emotional disturbance, it seems equally applicable to political behavior, as well,

particularly the political alienation process. If this is correct, then both personal and political ideation which are basically irrational in nature, at least in part, engender and/or exacerbate critical perceptions of the sociopolitical system's functioning, perceptions of personal threat arising from that functioning, and feelings of political alienation (Long, 1976b; Long, 1976c; Long, 1976h; Long, 1977a; Long, 1977f).

Having perceived the operations of the sociopolitical system in a critical light, therefore, the individual responds in the irrational manner described by Ellis. Furthermore, according to the model guiding this research, this irrational response exacerbates the individual's perceived freedom threat and/or loss, as well. Such feelings of personal threat from the system might be best encompassed by Brehm's theory of psychological reactance. Basic to this theory is an assumption concerning the arousal properties of perceived loss of freedom: ". . . if a person's behavioral freedom is reduced or threatened with reduction, he will become motivationally aroused. This arousal will presumably be directed against any further loss of freedom and it would also be directed toward the re-establishment of whatever freedom has already been lost or threatened" (Brehm, 1966: 2). In addition, "the magnitude of reactance is a direct function of (1) the importance of the free behaviors which are eliminated or threatened, (2) the proportion of free behaviors which are eliminated or threatened, and (3) where there is only a threat of elimination of free behaviors, the magnitude of that threat" (Brehm, 1966: 4).

In applying psychological reactance theory to political behavior, two more points should be emphasized. First, freedom need not be actually

threatened or reduced for the individual to experience psychological reactance. As Brehm writes, "if the observer believes he has the freedom that he sees threatened or eliminated for another, the more he feels he could be in the place of the other, the more reactance is aroused in him" (Brehm, 1972: 3). Thus, ". . . the observer must feel that he and the observed person are 'interchangeable'--that there are no differences in experience, status, power, and so on that imply that a threat to or elimination of the observed person's freedom does not apply to the observer's freedom" (Brehm, 1972: 3).

Equally important is the assumption that a person generalizes from threatened or eliminated freedoms to similar freedoms, at other times, in other circumstances:

> When a person sees a threat to, or elimination of one of his freedoms, it is probably not unusual for him to infer that some of his other freedoms are also threatened. To the extent that he makes such an inference, the magnitude of reactance tends to be greater than what would occur from the original threat or elimination. . . In general, a single threat or elimination of freedom can imply the loss of the same freedom on other occasions or the loss of similar freedoms in the same or other situations (Brehm, 1972: 2-3).

In expanding the original political-reality model of political alienation, then, it follows that critical perceptions of sociopolitical reality not only contribute to feelings of alienation from the sociopolitical system, directly, but also lead to irrational ideation and to psychological reactance. Furthermore, irrational ideation should foster higher levels of psychological reaction, as well as generate feelings of political alienation. Finally, feelings of psychological reactance should also contribute to political alienation. Therefore, six hypotheses emerge from this causal

model for empirical test in this study:

H_1 Critical perceptions of sociopolitical reality will correlate positively with feelings of political alienation.

H_2 Critical perceptions of sociopolitical reality will correlate positively with irrational ideation.

H_3 Critical perceptions of sociopolitical reality will correlate positively with psychological reactance.

H_4 Irrational ideation will correlate positively with psychological reactance.

H_5 Irrational ideation will correlate positively with feelings of political alienation.

H_6 Psychological reactance will correlate positively with feelings of political alienation.

Sample. The data employed in this study were gathered in February, 1976 by means of a written questionnaire which was self-administered by a sample of 264 Southern Connecticut State College students enrolled in required undergraduate introductory political science courses. Confidentiality and anonymity of individual responses were guaranteed for these students. The sample was predominantly female (59%), white (92%), and self-identified middle-class (78%). Most students were freshmen (53%) or sophomores (21%), majoring in social science (30%) or education (24%), with grade-point-averages of B (72%). Ideologically, most students described themselves as either moderates (39%) or liberals (42%).

Conceptual Indicators. The critical perceptions of sociopolitical reality concept was operationalized in this study using six scales, manifesting a mean inter-scale correlation of 0.71. The first of these indicators, the perceived economic discrimination scale, measured the extent to which

respondents viewed the poor as being exploited, neglected, and discriminated against by the sociopolitical system. The perceived economic alienation scale measured respondents' agreement with the notion that the poor lack political power and grounds for trusting political leaders. The perceived racial discrimination scale was employed to assess respondents' beliefs concerning the discrimination against, exploitation, and neglect of blacks by the sociopolitical system. The respondents' views regarding levels of black political efficacy and trust were tapped by the perceived racial alienation scale. Discrepancies between democratic ideals and practices in the sociopolitical system were measured by the democratic deficiency scale. Finally, the elitism scale assessed the belief that the sociopolitical system is governed by a monolithic power structure.

The irrational ideation concept was operationalized through the utilization of the personal irrationality and political irrationality scales, with an inter-scale correlation of 0.42.

Three scales, with a mean intercorrelation of 0.41, were used in operationalizing the psychological reactance concept. The political sensitivity scale measured the individual's reactions to hypothetical political threats. Reactions to imminent political threats were assessed by the political threat scale, and the most severe reactions to political threats were tapped by the political fear scale.

Five scales were used in operationalizing the political alienation concept, exhibiting a mean inter-scale correlation of 0.61. Olsen's political incapability scale was employed to measure feelings of political inefficacy or powerlessness; dissatisfaction with policy outputs was measured by Olsen's

political discontentment scale. Political distrust was assessed through the use of the Agger, et al. political cynicism scale. Lack of identification with the political system was measured by the political estrangement scale, and the political hopelessness scale served as a measure of the respondents' prognoses for the system's future.

These scales appear in their entirety in the Appendix.

Results. The first three hypotheses predict positive associations between critical perceptions of sociopolitical reality and irrational ideation, psychological reactance, and political alienation. As the correlations in Table 1 indicate, these hypotheses are, in varying degrees, supported. For example, with regard to the association between the sociopolitical reality and irrational ideation indicators, it is apparent that the economic discrimination and democratic deficiency measures correlate the most with the composite irrationality index, while both irrationality scales correlate with the composite sociopolitical reality index. In this context, it is of particular interest that only the racial discrimination measure is uncorrelated with the measures of irrationality. It should also be noted that although these two variable sets are associated, only about ten percent of the variance between these measures is accounted for.

Stronger support, approximately thirty percent of the variance, appears for the second hypothesis. Here, with the exception of the racial discrimination measure, all of the sociopolitical reality scales are moderately correlated with the psychological reactance indicators. Interestingly, the political sensitivity scale, assessing hypothetical political threats, is

TABLE 1. ZERO ORDER CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE SOCIOPOLITICAL REALITY SCALES AND THE IRRATIONAL IDEATION, PSYCHOLOGICAL REACTANCE, AND POLITICAL ALIENATION SCALES

	Personal Irrationality	Political Irrationality	Irrationality Composite Index	Political Sensitivity	Political Reactance	Political Fear	Reactance Composite Index	Political Inefficacy	Political Discontentment	Political Cynicism	Political Estrangement	Political Hopelessness	Alienation Composite Index
Racial Discrimination	06	06	07	11	17	12	20	03	20	10	09	10	14
Racial Alienation	17	13	19	17	26	31	36	20	45	36	25	31	41
Economic Discrimination	18	23	25	07	34	26	35	30	39	36	24	33	43
Economic Alienation	16	13	18	22	32	26	40	32	48	53	29	33	52
Democratic Deficiency	23	35	36	-06	64	54	59	39	56	45	41	57	64
Elitism	14	12	16	14	41	23	41	34	59	57	31	38	57
Sociopolitical Reality Composite Index	23	25	30	14	53	43	56	38	64	56	39	49	65

NOTE: Decimals have been omitted from correlations;
r= 12, p= 0.05.

less associated with the sociopolitical reality measures.

Even stronger support is accorded the hypothesized sociopolitical reality-political alienation relationship. Again, however, the racial discrimination scale exerts less impact on the composite political alienation index. It is also noteworthy that of the political alienation measures, the more system-oriented indicators correlate higher with the sociopolitical reality measures. Thus, it is the individual-oriented inefficacy and estrangement scales that are less affected by critical perceptions of sociopolitical reality.

The fourth hypothesis posits a positive association between the irrational ideation and psychological reactance measures. The correlations in Table 2 support the prediction. Again, though, the political sensitivity scale is less affected than are the reactance and fear dimensions; and, of the two irrationality measures, it is clear that the reactance measures are most affected by political, not personal, irrationality. Finally, as with the evidence in support of the first hypothesis, the correlations relevant to this hypothesis are moderate in strength.

A comparable level of support is provided the fifth hypothesis. In this instance, however, both personal and political irrational ideation are found to influence feelings of political alienation. Furthermore, of the five alienation indicators, it is the political estrangement dimension which is the least affected by such irrational ideation, suggesting that these students' identifications with the sociopolitical system are too firmly established to be vitiated by such irrational attitudes.

Of the six hypotheses tested, it is the last which receives the strongest

TABLE 2. ZERO ORDER CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE IRRATIONAL IDEATION SCALES AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL REACTANCE AND POLITICAL ALIENATION SCALES

	Political Sensitivity	Political Reactance	Political Fear	Reactance Composite Index	Political Inefficacy	Political Discontentment	Political Cynicism	Political Estrangement	Political Hopelessness	Alienation Composite Index
Personal Irrationality	-06	23	22	20	23	23	24	15	25	30
Political Irrationality	-06	45	38	41	35	26	30	19	35	40
Irrational Ideation Composite Index	-08	41	36	37	36	30	33	21	37	42

NOTE: Decimals have been omitted from correlations; r= 12, p= 0.05.

support, with forty-five percent of the variance between the reactance and alienation variable sets being accounted for in Table 3. Preceding patterns of association re-emerge here. For example, the political sensitivity scale is uncorrelated with all five political alienation measures; and the system-oriented alienation scales exhibit the highest correlations with the psychological reactance measures.

By way of summary, all six hypotheses generated from the three-factor model of political alienation outlined here have been supported by the bivariate correlations. It should also be mentioned that partial correlations, controlling for the extraneous effects of sex, race, class, grade-point-average, ideology, parental education level, and socioeconomic status, do not produce results significantly different from those presented here.

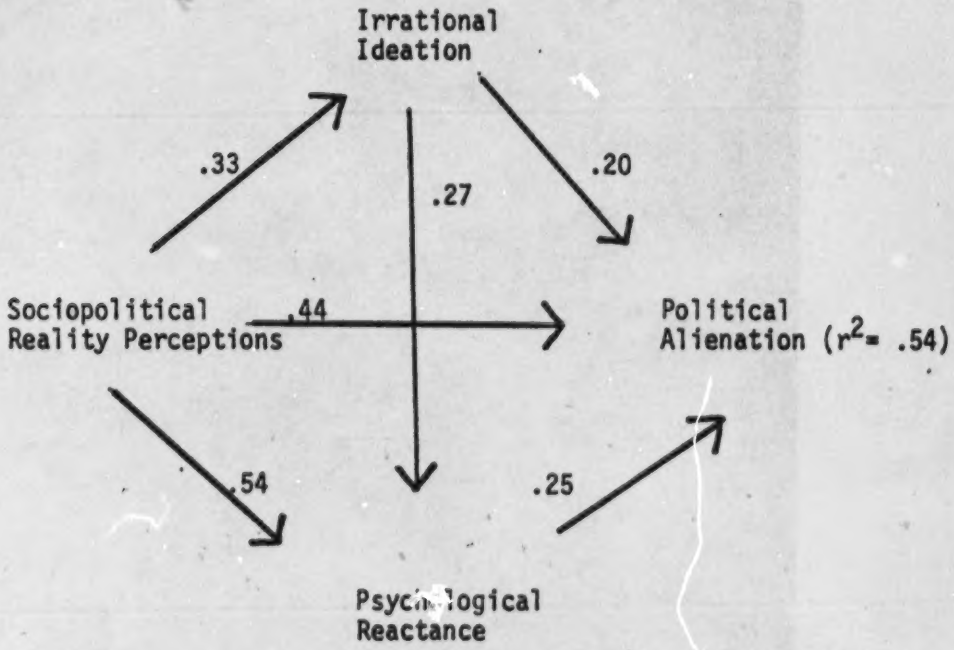
To this point in the analysis, the causal assumptions inherent in the three-factor model of political alienation forwarded here have been difficult to discern because of the employment of correlational analysis of a bivariate nature. This problem is remedied in Figure 1, where a path analysis supporting the model's assumptions appears. Significantly, all six causal assumptions in the model are supported by the path coefficients in Figure 1, albeit to varying degrees. For instance, it is noteworthy that the two strongest causal links appear between the sociopolitical reality indicator and the psychological reactance and political alienation indicators. This suggests, first, that personality mediators need not intervene between an individual's perceptions of systemic functioning and his affective reactions to that functioning; and, second, that when personality mediators do apply, reactance, rather than irrationality, may be the most typical

TABLE 3. ZERO ORDER CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL REACTANCE AND POLITICAL ALIENATION SCALES

	Political Inefficacy	Political Discontentment	Political Cynicism	Political Estrangement	Political Hopelessness	Alienation Composite Index
Political Sensitivity	-06	09	-07	-02	-01	-02
Political Reactance	47	61	55	38	72	75
Political Fear	28	37	38	32	52	52
Reactance Composite Index	38	57	47	36	65	67

NOTE: Decimals have been omitted from correlations;
r= 12, p= 0.05.

FIGURE 1. PATH MODEL OF POLITICAL ALIENATION ANTECEDENTS



NOTE: All path coefficients in this figure are equal to at least twice their standard errors.

consequence. Given the relative strengths of the six path coefficients in the model, however, it is evident that the predicted alienation antecedents do pertain. In other words, critical perceptions of sociopolitical reality engender irrational ideation, psychological reactance, and political alienation; and psychological reactance generates feelings of political alienation.

Discussion. A number of the findings reported above have important implications which warrant further comment. First, one point must be reiterated: the single best predictor of political alienation among the college students sampled was perceptions of sociopolitical reality, which accounted for almost five times more variance than did irrational ideation and psychological reactance combined. This finding, in conjunction with the other findings cited, conflicts with the portrait of the "politically alienated" encountered in both professional and journalistic sources (Templeton, 1966; Dean, 1960). This portrayal typically stresses a high level of ignorance regarding the sociopolitical environment, behavioral passivity and apathy, psychological detachment, and personality disfunctioning. In contrast to this model, the empirical results offered here, and in other recent literature on this topic, suggest that among the many individuals experiencing feelings of political alienation today, information levels are comparatively high, analytic ability is evident, efforts at sociopolitical involvement are typical, and personality deficits are absent. Indeed, much of the recent research on this subject indicates that many of today's politically alienated individuals conform to the textbook definition

of the "democratic man." These findings, in combination with the events in the sociopolitical world over the last decade, indicate that the fault may not reside in the citizenry, but rather in the system.

Of what relevance are these findings and conclusions? Some theorists would argue that moderate levels of alienation and disaffection contribute to greater systemic efficiency and democratic functioning (Berelson, et al., 1954). Unfortunately, one recent finding emerging from the systemic rejection literature tends to contradict this reasoning: the greater an individual's feeling of psychological reactance and political alienation, the greater the individual's condonation of violence to effect social and political change and the greater the individual's willingness to participate in such unconventional behavior to produce such reforms (Long, 1974a; Long, 1974b; Long, 1974c; Long, 1975a; Long, 1975c; Long, 1976h; Long, 1977d; Long and Strong, 1977).

REFERENCES

ABRAMSON, P. (1972) "Political efficacy and political trust among black schoolchildren: two explanations." Journal of Politics 34 (November): 1243-1275.

BERELSON, B., P. LAZARSFELD, and W. McPHEE (1954) Voting. Chicago: University of Chicago.

BREHM, J. (1972) Responses to Loss of Freedom: A Theory of Psychological Reactance. Morristown, N.J.: General Learning Press.

--- (1966) A Theory of Psychological Reactance. New York: Academic.

CITRIN, J., H. McCLOSKY, J. SHANKS, and P. SNIDERMAN (1975) "Personal and political sources of political alienation." British Journal of Political Science 5 (January): 1-31.

DEAN, D. (1960) "Alienation and political apathy." Social Forces 38 (March): 185-189.

ELLIS, A. (1974) "Rational-emotive theory: Albert Ellis," pp. 308-344 in A. Burton (ed.) Operational Theories of Personality. New York: Brunner/Mazel.

--- (1973a) Humanistic Psychotherapy: The Rational-Emotive Approach. New York: Julian Press.

--- (1973b) "Rational-emotive therapy," pp. 167-206 in R. Corsini (ed.) Current Psychotherapies. Itasca, Ill.: Peacock.

--- (1971) Growth Through Reason: Verbatim Cases in Rational-Emotive Therapy. Palo Alto, Calif.: Science and Behavior Books.

--- (1962) Reason and Emotion in Psychotherapy. Secaucus, N.J.: Lyle Stuart.

--- and R. Harper (1975) A New Guide to Rational Living. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

GREENBERG, E. (1970a) "Children and government: a comparison across racial lines." Midwest Journal of Political Science 14 (May): 249-275.

- - - (1970b) "Orientations of black and white children to political authority figures." Social Science Quarterly 51 (December): 561-571.

- - - (1969) "Children and the political community: a comparison across racial lines." Canadian Journal of Political Science 2 (December): 471-492.

ISRAEL, J. (1971) Alienation: From Marx to Modern Sociology. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

KOFF, S. (1973) "The political use of the concept of alienation," pp. 269-293 in F. Johnson (ed.) Alienation: Concept, Term, and Meanings. New York: Academic Press.

LONG, S. (1977a) "Irrational ideation and political reality: a theory of political alienation." Delivered at the annual meeting of the Southwestern Political Science Association, Dallas.

- - - (1977b) "Perceived racial reality and systemic disaffection: white-black adolescent comparisons." Journal of Black Studies (In Press).

- - - (1977c) "Personality and political alienation among white and black youth: a test of the social deprivation model." Journal of Politics (In Press).

- - - (1977d) "Personality and political revenge: psychopolitical adaptation among black and white youth." Journal of Black Studies (In Press).

- - - (1977e) "Political alienation: reality and reactance." Journal of Social Psychology (In Press).

- - - (1977f) "Political attribution for systemic failure: a two-dimensional analysis." Psychological Reports (In Press).

- - - (1977g) "Political hopelessness: a new dimension of systemic disaffection." Journal of Social Psychology (In Press).

- - - (1977h) "Political perspectives of white and black adolescents: reality and alienation." Journal of Political Science (In Press).

- - - (1977i) "Political reactance and political reality: a theory of political alienation." Delivered at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Chicago.

- - - (1977j) "Psychopolitical orientations of white and black youth: a test of five models." Delivered at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Chicago.

- - - (1976a) "An integrated social deprivation-political reality model of political alienation: black-white adolescent comparisons." Yale University: Political Psychology Program.

- - - (1976b) "Cognitive-perceptual factors in the political alienation process: a test of six models." Delivered at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago.

- - - (1976c) "Irrationality and systemic rejection: insights from Ellis' rational behavior theory." Delivered at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Chicago.

- - - (1976d) "Political alienation among black and white adolescents: a test of the social deprivation and political reality models." American Politics Quarterly 4 (July): 267-304.

- - - (1976e) "Perceived psychosocial comparison level and systemic rejection among white and black youth." Delivered at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, New York.

- - - (1976f) "Perceived relative deprivation and political orientation: a study of white and black adolescents." Journal of Political and Military Sociology 5 (Spring): 99-115.

- - - (1976g) "Political disenchantment: a cognitive-perceptual theory of political alienation." Delivered at the annual meeting of the Southwestern Political Science Association, Dallas.

- - - (1976h) "Psychological sources of systemic rejection among white and black adolescents." Delivered at the annual meeting of the American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C.

- - - (1975a) "Personality and systemic rejection: a study of white and black adolescents." Youth and Society 7 (December): 99-129.

- - - (1975b) "Sociopolitical reality and political alienation: a comparison of white and black adolescents." Delivered at the annual meeting of the Western Political Science Association, Seattle.

- - - (1975c) "Young revolutionaries: psychopolitical sources of political violence justification among white and black adolescents." Delivered at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago.

- - - (1974a) "Correlates of adolescents' condonation of unconventional political behavior." Delivered at the annual meeting of the Southwestern Political Science Association, Dallas.

- - - (1974b) "Personality and political socialization: political revenge attitudes among black and white youth." Delivered at the annual meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, New Orleans.

- - - (1974c) "Socialization to revolt: political alienation and political violence justification among white and black youth." Delivered at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago.

- - - and M. Strong (1976a) "The political system as youth see it: a research note." Phi Delta Kappan 58 (October): 208-209.

MILLER, A. (1974) "Political issues and trust in government: 1964-1970." American Political Science Review 68 (September): 951-972.

REMY, R. (1972) "International socialization: a comparative analysis of the development of pre-adult orientations toward national and international systems." Ph.D. dissertation. Evanston, Ill. Northwestern University.

RODGERS, H. (1974) "Toward explanation of the political efficacy and policynicism of black adolescents: an exploratory study." American Journal of Political Science 18 (May): 257-282.

SCHACHT, R. (1970) Alienation. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.

SEEMAN, M. (1975) "Alienation studies," pp. 91-123 in A. Inkeles (ed.) Annual Review of Sociology. Palo Alto, Calif.: Annual Reviews.

- - - (1972) "Alienation and estrangement," pp. 467-527 in A. Campbell and P. Converse (eds.) The Human Meaning of Social Change. New York: Russell Sage.

TEMPLETON, F. (1966) "Alienation and political participation: some research findings." Public Opinion Quarterly 30 (Summer): 249-261.

WRIGHT, J. (1976) The Dissent of the Governed: Alienation and Democracy in America. New York: Academic.

APPENDIX

Sociopolitical Reality Scales

Economic Discrimination:

When they both commit the same crimes, poor people get longer sentences than rich people.
Political leaders take advantage of rich people more than they do poor people. (Reflected)
Most laws treat the rich worse than the poor. (Reflected)
Businessmen cheat poor people more than they do rich people.
Police treat poor people worse than rich people.

Source: Original
Alpha: 0.56
Range: 7-35 (High Discrimination)
Mean: 23.22
Standard Deviation: 4.58

Economic Alienation:

Poor people have as much political power as rich people. (Reflected)
Poor people have as much say in how our government is run as do rich people. (Reflected)
A rich man has a much better chance of influencing our political leaders than does a poor man.
Poor people have more reason to trust our political leaders than do rich people. (Reflected)
Most politicians don't really represent the interests of poor people.
Poor people have no reason to believe what politicians tell them.

Source: Original
Alpha: 0.63
Range: 7-42 (High Alienation)
Mean: 31.16
Standard Deviation: 4.92

Racial Discrimination:

When they both commit the same crimes, black people get longer sentences than white people.
Political leaders take advantage of white people more than they do black people. (Reflected)
Most laws treat whites worse than blacks. (Reflected)
Businessmen cheat black people more than they do white people.

Police treat black people worse than white people.

Source: Original
Alpha: 0.57
Range: 7-35 (High Discrimination)
Mean: 23.22
Standard Deviation: 4.58

Racial Alienation:

Black people have as much political power as white people. (Reflected)
Black people have as much say in how our government is run as do white people. (Reflected)
A white man has a much better chance of influencing our political leaders than does a black man.
Black people have more reason to trust our political leaders than do white people. (Reflected)
Most politicians don't really represent the interests of black people.
Black people have no reason to believe what politicians tell them.

Source: Original
Alpha: 0.65
Range: 7-42 (High Alienation)
Mean: 27.42
Standard Deviation: 5.46

Democratic Deficiency:

People like me probably believe in basic democratic principles more than our political leaders do.
This country is becoming less democratic every day.
It's very disturbing to me that the interests of some groups of people aren't fully represented in our political system.
Although our government is supposed to be based on justice for everyone, it really isn't just at all.
I regret very much that there isn't more racial equality in this country today.
No matter what the civics books say, all people are not treated politically equally.
I'm very much concerned about many people in this country today not having as much political equality as they should.
Personal liberty is something that's only written about in text-books, not something that really exists in this country today.
Although I wish it were otherwise, no one in this country today has as much freedom as the Constitution says they should have.

Source: Original
Alpha: 0.70.
Range: 7-63 (High Deficiency)
Mean: 42.06
Standard Deviation: 7.46

Elitism:

In the United States, very wealthy people, such as leaders in industry and banking, have much more influence over what the government does than do most other Americans.
In the United States, the major decisions made in each of the major areas of the society, such as industry, foreign affairs, race relations, and so on, are made by the same group of people.
In the United States, the major decisions made in each of the major areas of the society, such as industry, foreign affairs, race relations, and so on, represent the will of the majority of Americans. (Reflected)
In the United States, there are no elites or masses since all citizens have the opportunity to participate in politics and to influence the major decisions of the society. (Reflected)
In the United States, people who are knowledgeable about politics, skilled in public relations, and who have a lot of information about public issues have as much influence on what the government does as do people with wealth or high economic status. (Reflected)
In the United States, most major decisions that shape the future of the country are made by an elite or small group of people, and the great mass of Americans has no real chance of becoming members of this elite.

Source: Remy (1972)
Alpha: 0.69
Range: 7-42 (High Elitism)
Mean: 30.30
Standard Deviation: 5.73

Irrational Ideation Scales

Personal Irrationality:

I worry over possible misfortunes.
I worry about situations where I am being tested.
My feelings are easily hurt.
Sometimes I feel that no one loves me.
I find it difficult to take criticism without feeling hurt.
I worry about little things.

Helping others is the very basis of life.
Other people's problems frequently cause me great concern.
I get terribly upset and miserable when things are not the way I would like them to be.
It is very important to me when I do a good job to be praised.

Source: Original
Alpha: 0.66
Range: 7-63 (High Irrationality)
Mean: 28.86
Standard Deviation: 8.00

Political Irrationality:

The American people should rely more on their leaders.
There is a perfect solution to many of the major problems in this country today.
It probably is best for the American people not to need strong leaders to constantly rely upon. (Reflected)
Today's social and political problems are not necessarily the result of past mistakes on the part of our leaders. (Reflected)
If political events in this country do not turn out as planned, it's not a great catastrophe. (Reflected)
Our political leaders needn't be perfect in every way. (Reflected)
It is a terrible catastrophe when affairs in this country do not work out as we want them to.
There is always a right or perfect solution for every political problem, and it must be found or the results will be catastrophic.
The way some people in this country, such as blacks and Indians, are treated is just awful.
The past actions of our political leaders are an important cause of our failure to remedy our present difficulties.
Even if our present political situation is partially a function of our political past, the influence of the past can be overcome. (Reflected)
Our political leaders must be perfectly competent and informed to deserve our respect and trust.
It isn't terrible if political affairs don't work out as we want them to. (Reflected)
One should be quite upset over political problems, such as war and international conflict.

Source: Original
Alpha: 0.61
Range: 7-98 (High Irrationality)
Mean: 53.20
Standard Deviation: 8.96

Psychological Reactance Scales

Political Sensitivity:

If the government wouldn't allow newspapers to print whatever they wished, I would be very disturbed.
I would feel very threatened if the government prohibited me from reading certain books or watching certain television programs.
If the government wouldn't permit me to vote in elections, I would be very angry.
If the government denied me the right to live where I pleased, I don't think I'd be too concerned. (Reflected)
I would be very upset if the government denied me the right of free speech.
I really don't think I'd be too concerned if the government made it illegal for people to criticize our political leaders. (Reflected)
I can't imagine getting upset over not being permitted by the government to support a particular political party in an election. (Reflected)
I would not be particularly disturbed if the government prohibited me from seeking certain kinds of employment. (Reflected)
I would feel very frustrated if the government wouldn't allow me to associate with or talk to certain people.

Source: Original
Alpha: 0.70
Range: 7-63 (High Sensitivity)
Mean: 54.38
Standard Deviation: 7.26

Political Threat:

The way our leaders are running the country these days, I really feel threatened.
Sometimes I feel that the poor leadership we've had in this country recently is going to somehow threaten the kind of life I'd like to live.
I'm not going to be able to live the kind of life I'd like to live because of the way this country is being run.
I'm not as free to do some of the things I'd like to do because of the way this country is being run.
I feel personally threatened when I hear how our government is managing the economy these days.
I really don't see how the government could influence my life in any way. (Reflected)

I don't view the government as a threat to my personal freedom. (Reflected)
With the recent wiretapping and spying activities of the government coming to light, it's obvious that the personal privacy of all of us is threatened.
Because of the government's handling of our economy, a lot of students like me won't be able to get jobs when they graduate.

Source: Original
Alpha: 0.81
Range: 7-63 (High Threat)
Mean: 37.77
Standard Deviation: 9.05

Political Fear:

I become afraid when I hear what some of our political leaders have been doing recently.
I'm not afraid of the government or its leaders. (Reflected)
When I read about what the government is doing to some people these days, I become frightened for my own safety.
There's nothing the government can do to frighten me. (Reflected)
I have no reason to fear the actions of our political leaders. (Reflected)
Some of the government's recent activities make me afraid for my personal well-being.

Source: Original
Alpha: 0.69
Range: 7-54 (High Fear)
Mean: 25.62
Standard Deviation: 5.68

Political Alienation Scales:

Political Inefficacy:

I believe public officials don't care much what people like me and my parents think.
There is no way other than voting that people like me and my parents can influence actions of the government.
Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that I can't really understand what's going on.
People like me and my parents don't have any say about what the government does.

Source: Olsen (1969)
Alpha: 0.62
Range: 7-28 (High Inefficacy)
Mean: 15.99
Standard Deviation: 4.70

Political Discontentment:

As the government is now organized and operated, I think it is hopelessly incapable of dealing with all the crucial problems facing the country today.
It seems to me that the government often fails to take necessary actions on important matters, even when people favor such actions.
These days the government is trying to do too many things, including some activities that I don't think it has the right to do.
For the most part, the government serves the interests of a few organized groups, such as business or labor, and isn't very concerned about the needs of people like my parents and me.

Source: Olsen (1969)
Alpha: 0.66
Range: 7-28 (High Discontentment)
Mean: 17.95
Standard Deviation: 4.14

Political Cynicism:

Money is the most important factor influencing public policies.
Politicians represent the general interest more frequently than they represent special interests. (Reflected)
In order to get nominated, most candidates for political office have to make basic compromises and undesirable commitments.
Politicians spend most of their time getting reelected or reappointed.
People are very frequently manipulated by politicians.
A large number of city and county politicians are political hacks.

Source: Agger, et al. (1961)
Alpha: 0.61
Range: 7-42 (High Cynicism)
Mean: 29.26
Standard Deviation: 5.09

Political Estrangement:

When I think about government and politics in the United States, I consider myself an outsider.
I tend to identify myself with and feel closely associated with American politics and government. (Reflected)
When I hear or read about the politics and governmental system of the United States, I feel that I am a part of that system. (Reflected)
When I think about the government in Washington, I don't feel as if it's my government.

Source: Original
Alpha: 0.74
Range: 7-28 (High Estrangement)
Mean: 16.64
Standard Deviation: 5.30

Political Hopelessness:

The future of this country seems dark to me.
I have great faith in the future of this country. (Reflected)
All I can see ahead for the United States is unpleasantness, rather than pleasantness.
I can look forward to more good times for the United States than bad times. (Reflected)
The future of the United States seems vague and uncertain to me.
I look forward to the future for this country with hope and enthusiasm. (Reflected)

Source: Original
Alpha: 0.86
Range: 7-42 (High Hopelessness)
Mean: 21.94
Standard Deviation: 7.16